

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 TRSE-00 IO-10 EURE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /081 W
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P R 261718Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1163

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJ: RESIGNATION OF LABOR MINISTER

REF: MADRID 1329

BEGIN SUMMARY: LABOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION HAS BEEN CONFIRMED,
BUT IT STILL UNCERTAIN WHETHER OTHER POSSIBLE CABINET
CHANGES MAY OCCUR. END SUMMARY

1. REPORTS IN REFTEL THAT LABOR MINISTER DE LA FUENTE HAD
SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION, HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED IN TODAY'S
PRESS AND BY GOVT OFFICIALS.

2. LABOR MINISTER DE LA FUENTE'S RESIGNATION, HOWEVER,
HAS REPORTEDLY NOT YET BEEN ACCEPTED BY PRESIDENT ARIAS.
IT BELIEVED PRESIDENT ARIAS IS WAITING UNTIL AFTER HIS TV
SPEECH TONIGHT BEFORE ACCEPTING THIS RESIGNATION. CONSENSUS
IS THERE NO POSSIBILITY DE LA FUENTE WOULD NOW RECONSIDER
HIS RESIGNATION OR AGREE TO STAY ON, AND LABOR MINISTRY SOURCES
CONFIRM DE LA FUENTE DURING RECENT DAYS HAS VACATED HIS OFFICE
AND TAKEN HOME ALL HIS PERSONAL BELONGINGS.

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3. SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS INCLUDE: (A) TECHNICAL SECGEN OF PRESIDENCY FERNANDEZ SUAREZ; (B) CURRENT BARCELONA CIVIL GOVERNOR AND ONE-TIME SSO SECGEN RODOLFO MARTIN VILLA; (C) CURRENT DIRGEN OF SOCIAL PROMOTION AT LABOR MINISTRY EFREN BORRAJO; (D) CURRENT MOVIMIENTO MINISTER UTRERA MOLINA, WHO UNDER THIS VERSION WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO HEAD LABOR MINISTRY; (E) NATIONAL COUNCILOR OF MOVEMENT FERNANDO LABADIE; (F) HEAD OF SSO'S COUNCIL OF EMPLOYERS, FRANCISCO ABELLA MARTIN; AND (G) CURRENT HEAD OF ALTOS HORNOS DE VIZCAYA, MIGUEL VILLAR MIR.

4. ABOVE RANGE OF POSSIBLE CANDIDATES INCLUDE BOTH REGIME LIBERALIZERS SUCH AS SUAREZ, VILLAR MIR, MARTIN VILLA, AND BORRAJO, AND THE OPPOSITE EXTREME OF REGIME CONSERVATIVE HARD-LINERS, I.E., UTRERA MOLINA, LABADIE, AND ABELLA MARTIN. THUS DESIGNATION OF NEW LABOR MINISTER WILL GIVE CLEAR INDICATION AS TO WHETHER GOVT LABOR POLICY WILL CONTINUE ITS FITFUL EFFORTS IN LIBERAL DIRECTION OR WHETHER IT WILL RETURN TO DAYS OF MORE CONSERVATIVE REGIME LABOR DOCTRINES.

5. ADDITIONALLY, THERE STILL MUCH SPECULATION THAT LABOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION MAY PROVIDE OCCASION FOR ARIAS TO CHANGE OTHER MINISTERS, EITHER UNDER PRESSURE FROM VARIOUS REGIME ELEMENTS, OR BECAUSE THE MINISTERS HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES UNABLE TO DEAL WITH EVENTS IN THEIR JURISDICTION, OR BECAUSE ARIAS HAS FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO WORK WITH SOME OF THEM.

6. COMMENT: IF GOVERNMENT USES OCCASION OF DE LA FUENTE'S DEPARTURE TO REMOVE SEVERAL OTHER MINISTERIAL LIABILITIES, WHAT BEGAN AS ISOLATED DISPUTE OVER SPECIFIC TECHNICAL POLICY ISSUE WILL COME TO APPEAR AS FULL-BLOWN CABINET CRISIS, FURTHER NOURISHING WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION OF DEEP DIVISIONS AND INSTABILITY WITHIN ARIAS ADMINISTRATION. ARIAS HIMSELF AWARE OF THIS AND, WHILE NO EVIDENCE HIS OWN TENURE IN JEOPARDY, HE MINDFUL OF NEED OF KEEPING UP APPEARANCES THAT THINGS ARE UNDER CONTROL. REPORTEDLY, FRANCO HIMSELF ALSO HAS BUILT-IN DISTASTE TOWARD HAVING TO ACCOMMODATE NEW FACES ON HIS TEAM TOO FREQUENTLY. FOR THESE AND OTHER REASONS GOVT SEEMS TO BE HANDLING CURRENT MINI-CRISIS WITH CONSIDERABLE CAUTION AND IN LOW-KEY.

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